

## 2.0 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

The Federal District Court for the District of Columbia (NRDC v. Administrator, ERDA/DOE), directed that this supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS) be prepared to address the design and safety alternative of the waste storage tanks authorized in FY-1976 and -1977 projects for storing high-level radioactive waste at the Savannah River Plant (SRP).<sup>\*</sup> The pertinent part of the Court Order is reproduced in the Foreword of this Supplement.

At SRP ten tanks are involved in the Court action, four in the FY-1976 project and six in FY-1977. In addition, four tanks being provided in a FY-1978 project are also covered by the statement. These tanks are being built to continue the program begun in FY-1974 at SRP to provide additional waste tanks (1) to accommodate storage of fresh radioactive wastes as they are generated by production operations and (2) to replace with new Type III tanks all older-design tanks beginning with tanks with a history of leakage where practicable. This program was discussed as the base case (Alternative 4) in the Final EIS on Waste Management Operations, Savannah River Plant, Aiken, South Carolina, USDOE Report ERDA-1537 (September 1977). Alternative 4 of ERDA-1537, which is the present waste management plan, provides for continued improvement of waste management practices as improved technology can be developed and equipment can be procured.

This supplement to ERDA-1537, in addition to evaluating the environmental effects of the new waste tanks, specifically addresses the alternative design and safety features for the new tanks as they affect the durability and reliability of these tanks. It also considers any effects of these features on the ease of removal of the wastes from the tanks and on the choice of technology and timing for ultimately processing the wastes for long-term disposal.

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<sup>\*</sup> A similar EIS has been prepared for the Hanford Site.